

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner indicated that it was "difficult to ascertain" the numbering and dependency of existing claims 119-165. During a brief telephone interview on November 19, 2002, the Examiner requested that Applicants cancel claims 119-165, and resubmit each of these claims as new claims 166-212.

In the previous Amendments, however, Applicants resolved any ostensible confusion over the pending claims in a number of ways. For example, Applicants repeatedly stated that

[i]n the Supplemental Amendment dated January 5, 2001, Applicants added new claims 94-118. In the Amendment dated October 30, 2001, however, Applicants incorrectly added new claims 117-135. Since claims 117 and 118 were already pending at the time this Amendment was filed, Applicants believe that new claims 117-135 were renumbered as claims 119-137, respectively. As a result of this Amendment, claims 99-114 and 119-165 are now pending.

Amendment dated April 15, 2002 at p. 7. In the Amendment dated August 6, 2002, Applicants also specifically renumbered claims 117-135 as claims 119-137 to resolve any possible difficulty in ascertaining the status of the pending claims.

Nevertheless, Applicants herein have canceled renumbered claims 119-165, and replaced each of these claims as new claims 166-212 to avoid any further unnecessary delay and move this case to allowance.

Should it be necessary to resolve any additional concerns to expedite the issuance of a Notice of Allowance, the Examiner is invited contact Applicants' representative at (202) 408-6052.

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Please grant any extension of time to the extent required to enter this response and charge any fees required to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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